

THE COURIER

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Doctor Raymond R. Tibbetts, M.D., (1875-1958)

Bethel Doctors, 1900-1950

By Margaret Joy Tibbetts

Editor's Note: A version of this essay was presented as a lecture sponsored by the Bethel Historical Society on 7 November 1991 held in the Dr. Moses Mason House Meeting Room. The author has revised, added to and updated her remarks for this issue.

In this essay, I deliberately limited the time period to those years which I know well. My father, Raymond R. Tibbetts, M.D. (1875-1958) practiced medicine in Bethel from 1905 to 1957. My mother, Pearl Ashby Tibbetts (1885-1982), was a registered nurse. I was born in 1919 and I have many recollections of what life in a busy doctor's house was like. Obviously my memories are not all inclusive, but eyewitness accounts are often very useful to future historians even if inadequate. My memories also, of course, tend to feature one doctor—Dr. Tibbetts. Since he practiced here for over fifty years, his experiences were very typical; perhaps in some cases—accidents, for example—his experiences were broader than for the other doctors since Dr. Tibbetts' office was on

upper Main Street beside the drug store and emergency cases were often brought to the easiest office to locate.

The early 1900s were a period of rapid change in American life; much of the change came in the form of great inventions. These inventions were eventually to transform the life of the average American. Among the earliest of these transformations were the telephone, which came to Bethel in 1895, and the automobile that arrived here seven years later in 1902.

The most popular and the busiest of Bethel doctors at that time was Dr. John A. Twaddle (1849-1918). There were other doctors; Dr. Tibbetts bought his practice from Dr. Gardiner Sturtevant in 1907. Dr. Twaddle, a native of Weld, had come to Bethel in 1877 and enjoyed a very large practice. In country towns, doctors were usually prominent citizens and Dr. Twaddle was accepted as an almost indispensable part of Bethel life. The Twaddles, old Doctor Twaddle and his two sons, Dr. Widd and Dr. Gard Twaddle, all had fine personalities. They were noted for their friendliness, humor, kindness and competence.

Dr. Twaddle's practice covered a large area: Bethel Hill, West, East, North and South Bethel, Greenwood, Mason, Albany, Newry, sometimes Upton, and after the death of Dr. John Willard, Woodstock. In time, other doctors including Dr. Twaddle's son, Dr. Widd, and Dr. Tibbetts also had patients in these areas.

When Dr. Twaddle began his practice, he had used a horse and buggy to cover his territory. This conveyance was delightful at some seasons of the year, but had obvious limitations when a doctor was needed in a hurry—for example in the case of a serious accident. Accidents were common in the country. In time, the telephone and the automobile would become essential for the physicians, but in the early 1900s one could not be sure of finding a telephone in every home, and in the winter, particularly, one must not assume that the automobile could reach the patient through drifts of snow and not every patient owned an automobile. I can remember when, in the winter, my father kept horses in our barn up until 1927. When I was five years old (1924), I saw how difficult it could be for country people. One winter day we were all in the kitchen when a big old horse with sleigh came thundering into the dooryard. The horse was covered with ropes of sweat. My mother jumped up and rushed to send my brother out to help the young boys in the sleigh walk the horse to cool down. "Do not let that horse drink water," she called to the boys and rushed to help the doctor (my father) into a surgical gown. When they brought the child into the house the blood dripped through the old quilt so much that the hall floor was slippery.

Later we were told that the child in the quilt had been playing with others on the roof of a small farm building. The children jumping around did not see a weather vane under the snow, and the weather vane's very sharp edge had cut the child severely. There was much stitching for the doctor to do.

What impressed me most at the time was the worn out old horse. Now I think of how agonizing for the parents that trip must have been, a bleeding, crying child and other children frightened and shivering under the edges of an old quilt. Also I now think of how many things could go wrong in dealing



Dr. Isaac H. Wight, M.D. He died 28 October 1931, age 56. He was found dead in his car near Riverside Cemetery. A member of the Bethel Odd Fellows and the local Masonic lodge, he was also a trustee of Gould Academy and president of the Bethel Savings Bank. Over four hundred attended his funeral at the Bethel Congregational Church. He began his practice in Bethel in 1902 shortly after his graduation from the University of Vermont Medical School.

with wounds of that magnitude. Both patients and doctors were to benefit in 1924 when the campaign to build the Rumford Hospital was launched. The initiative for the Hospital came from a prominent Rumford surgeon, Dr. Eugene McCarty, who was moved to begin the project by his experiences in having to take patients out of town to find a hospital. For the doctors, the Rumford Hospital meant a significant rise in the level of possible care.

After old Dr. Twaddle died in 1918, he was succeeded in his practice by his older son, Dr. Widd Twaddle (1884-1963). The Bethel doctors all got along well with each other. They practiced independently and seldom consulted on a case, but they "talked shop" a good deal at the drugstore with the druggist. William Bosserman (1861-1948) was the owner of the drugstore; his pharmacist Alton Carroll (1896-1973) was considered exceptionally good at his job.

Along with Dr. Tibbetts and Dr. Twaddle, the third doctor in the 1920s and early 1930s was Dr. Issac W. Wight, who died in 1931. He was much liked, a tall slender, courteous man. He was succeeded by his nephew, Dr. Harry Wilson, young, energetic, and very good looking. During World War II, Dr. Wilson left to go into military service. At the war's end, he left Bethel permanently. Dr. Homer Lawrence came to Bethel in 1942. He was succeeded by Dr. Willard Boynton in 1945. For two years Dr. John A. Matheson was associated with Dr. Boynton. They also served as Gould Academy physicians as did Dr. Tibbetts in an earlier era.

All the doctors were busy; none was a specialist. At that

time, country doctors were expected to be able to take care of all types of cases, at least initially. Relations between doctors and patients were very informal. Seldom did patients make appointments. Usually they just came to the office when convenient or telephoned. Dr. Tibbetts carried most of his files and appointment schedules in his head. Fortunately, he had an excellent memory. His medical files consisted of the daily record of patients seen with the name of the patient, the type of the illness or affliction—one or two words—and then two or three words followed by a line to indicate whether or not the patient had paid.

Bethel had very few arrangements for helping or caring for poor people before the New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt came into being. The informality of the time and the doctors' relations with their patients somewhat compensated for the relative indifference of town officials.

My mother told me of one instance of my father stopping for gas at Frank Robertson's filling station on Railroad Street (now the Big Apple). Frank said that a little girl from a house across the tracks had left a message with Frank to ask Dr. Tibbetts to come by and look at her brother who had a "bad bellyache." The doctor said to tell her he would come by after supper. When he went down after supper, my mother went with him. She said below the tracks it was pitch black, impossible to see except with car lights. The doctor said the absence of street lights was due to the stinginess of the town officials who did not believe in spending taxpayer's money on poor people.

When they entered one of the small houses below the tracks, the parents had no idea the doctor was coming but welcomed him warmly. To go upstairs, the doctor went on a ladder, examined the little boy carefully (he told my mother he was afraid the appendix might rupture). After pushing and probing, etc., the doctor decided the little boy was all right but that his sister should keep a watch for danger signals.

The doctor's fees at that time were laughable by today's standards, even allowing for changes in the value of money.



Dr. Widd B. Twaddle (extreme right) poses with members of his wife's family on Metallak Island, Umbagog Lake about 1915. Also in the photograph are standing (left to right): Aldana (1855-1928) and Mary King Brooks (1865-1934), Gerry Brooks (1878-1966), Grover Brooks (1892-1955), Harry Brooks (1883-1943), Agnes Brooks Twaddle (1885-1971). Seated (left to right): Mildred Mason Brooks (1882-1934), Ethel Sanborn Brook (1888-1945). Photo courtesy of Donald and Eleanor Brooks.



Alton Carroll, druggist, sits at the soda fountain in Bosserman's Drug Store, Bethel, 1950s. Don Brown Photo.

A patient's visit to Dr. Tibbetts in 1930 cost \$1—later in the 1930s it increased to \$2. A visit to the patient's home in the country was \$5. An enterprising young local man returned to Bethel from Massachusetts for his wife to have their baby when he discovered that for delivery and postnatal care Dr. Tibbetts charged \$25.

Fortunately for the older doctors it was not until after World War II that medical insurance was used frequently by patients because, prior to that time, they were frustrated with the process and skeptical of even the idea. Neither my mother nor my father ever came to accept the concept of medical insurance easily; my father thought it a nuisance; my mother believed it promoted carelessness.

My mother often said that my father could not have practiced medicine successfully without the Bethel telephone operators and Alton Carroll. Compared to today's medical standards of careful files, medical histories, complex equipment and medications, the methods and routines of country doctors of the pre-war period were backward. The medical drug salesman who came regularly in the 1920s and 1930s began to be replaced by more sophisticated methods of selling new drugs. Perhaps one of the most useful developments was the cooperation among doctors allowing them to have joint practices and time off at regular intervals.

The type of practice to which my mother referred and the one in which she participated so fully was often exciting and challenging. The telephone operators were regular players in "hunting down" or locating the doctor as he made his rounds in order to save time, mileage and money. Relatively often my father would be wanted on one side of the Androscoggin and at the same time he was speeding along the back roads to reach the other side. The need to intercept him was a "game" the operators played with great skill.

A Bethel operator—the best at that time were Mona Martyn and Alice Smith—would telephone operators and acquaintances on the appropriate side, outline the problem and the time limits. The operators would then find someone willing to hail the doctor as he came by at the right time. Once the message was delivered, the doctor would rush off as needed. No one ever refused or hesitated about helping.

Alton Carroll's friendship and assistance were most valuable to my mother. He could read my father's handwriting, assist my mother when patients arrived at the office during the doctor's absence to ask for medications, and often work with my mother on numerous accidents by bandaging victims while waiting for the doctor to return.

When the war ended in 1945, my father was seventy and beginning to talk of retiring although, except for refusing to make night calls, he did not change his daily routines much.

The system of organizing doctor's offices changed considerably, however, with joint practices, more modern equipment, and the eventual development of extensive health insurance organizations, both private and government operated. These new developments, which seemed to save some of the doctor's time, are now common. The days of chasing the doctor down within a sizeable area are no longer necessary. Bethel went through a period of reorganization, which eventually in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the formation of the Bethel Health Center, which is outside the limits of this presentation, but remains a story that needs to be told.

My brother, sister and I all realized even as children that my father thoroughly enjoyed practicing medicine and reveled in being a country doctor. He liked the variety and the excitement; he enjoyed the admiration of the townspeople and the sense of being useful. He was amply repaid for his hard work and late hours by the loyalty of his patients and their respect for his courage and skill. He was not an easygoing or cheerful, joking man. Often he was brusque and silent. In his defense, he did not have much chance to talk when my mother, sister and I were all at home. In all the years I knew him, he only once told a funny story. He was, however, a devastating mimic, who could do a priceless interpretation of the Headmaster of Gould Academy or some of the self-important guests at the Bethel Inn with whom he played golf. Medicine was his major interest and he enjoyed practicing in a town surrounded by woods and mountains. He loved making his house calls to watch the changing seasons, the progress of each farmer's crops, or the occasional deer or partridge in an orchard eating buds.



Pearl Ashby Tibbetts, R.N., wife of Dr. Raymond R. Tibbetts

My mother told me once that she and my father often thought how fortunate they had been when as strangers fate brought them to Bethel to live in a beautiful town, in pleasant surroundings with so many good people living there. Bethel has had conscientious and able doctors who have helped to make this a place in which we are all happy to live. May all future doctors be as happy here as have been the Bethel doctors of its past.

President's Column

Many members serve on the more than twenty standing committees of the Society. These dedicated individuals help our organization gain new members, raise funds, enhance programming, and generally make it stronger. As time passes, we know that the Society will continue to be the repository for an increasing number of photographs, documents, artifacts and memories of our region. Its profile appears to be growing in significance every year and we expect 2005 will be no exception. Volunteers will be needed for many projects and there are a number of committees to join. Feel free to call me at 824-2239 or the Society office (824-2908) if you would like to become a committee member or an active volunteer.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their help during the past year and all those who made donations to the Annual Fund and the Society's collections. Together we are making progress and we expect to see more goals realized in the future.

Arlan R. Jodrey

ANNUAL FUND

Help keep the Society strong by making a gift to its Annual Fund Campaign. Tax deductible contributions help support its exhibits, special events, publications, and other programming. Gifts in any amount may be made throughout the year to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012.

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The Bethel Historical Society is committed to building on its reputation as a premier regional history center that will continue to enrich the educational and cultural life of its community for generations to come. Members and friends have generously contributed to the operations of the Society and to the acquisition of the Robinson House. In order to ensure the long-term maintenance and further development of the Center's facilities, programs, and collections, the Society is seeking new forms of support. You, readers of *The Courier*, are asked to consider making a charitable gift to the Society through a bequest in your will, the establishment of a trust, or a number of other financial arrangements and options that are available. These charitable gifts can be structured to support the Society's mission while at the same time assuring the security of your family. For more information, please contact the Society by calling (207) 824-2908 or (800) 824-2910 or by writing to P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012 or by emailing: info@bethelhistorical.org

Calendar of Events for 2005

February 26—Annual Heritage Day
March 17, 31- April 14, 28—Course: Farming in Maine
1600-the present
April 9—Lecture on Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain and book
signing
April 18—Antiquarian Supper/Patriot's Day Celebration
May 12—Lecture—Jean Hankins, Ph.D., "Settling Oxford
County"
May 28—Faye Taylor Memorial Art Show
St. Never's Day Sale
June 9—Larry Glatz, Chairman, Oxford County Bicentennial
Committee, "The Oxford Bears"
June 11—Oxford County Bicentennial Celebration at Paris
Hill
July 4—Community Picnic and Portland Brass Quintet
August 12-14—Sudbury Canada Days
August 19—Reception for the Opening of the "Barn Again!"
Exhibit
September 8—Annual Meeting—Lecture, Christi Mitchell,
Maine Historic Preservation Commission, "History
of Maine Barns"
September 17—Barn Tour
October 8—Grange Supper and Maine Humorist
October 13—Lecture, William Bunting, "A Day's Work"
October 22—Closing of the "Barn Again!" Exhibit
November 10—Slide Presentation Celebrating Newry's
Bicentenary
December 8—Annual "Christmas with the Masons"
December 31—8th Annual New Year's Bethel

Bethel Doctor's Rate Schedule for 1904

Drs. G. L. Sturtevant and Issac H. Wight in the 6 January 1904 issue of the *Bethel News* announced their rates: (1) Visits within the Corporation limits—\$1 (2) Visits outside Corporation limits within two miles \$1.25 (3) Visits outside two mile radius—\$2 (4) Incidental calls in passing—\$1 (5) Services between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.—double (6) Obstetrical attendance with subsequent visits not included—\$10.

Capital Campaign Update

Over \$650,000 has been raised to date from cash, stock, gifts, pledges, grants, and challenges from over 400 donors. Another comprehensive listing of those making gifts will be included in a 2005 issue. To learn more about this Society project or to make a capital gift, see our web-site address on page 12 or call (800) 824-2910 or write us at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012.

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A record 452 donors contributed more than \$24,000 to the 2004 Annual Fund campaign. Much gratitude is expressed to all of the following for their generosity:

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Diary of William S. Hastings
(continued from the last issue)

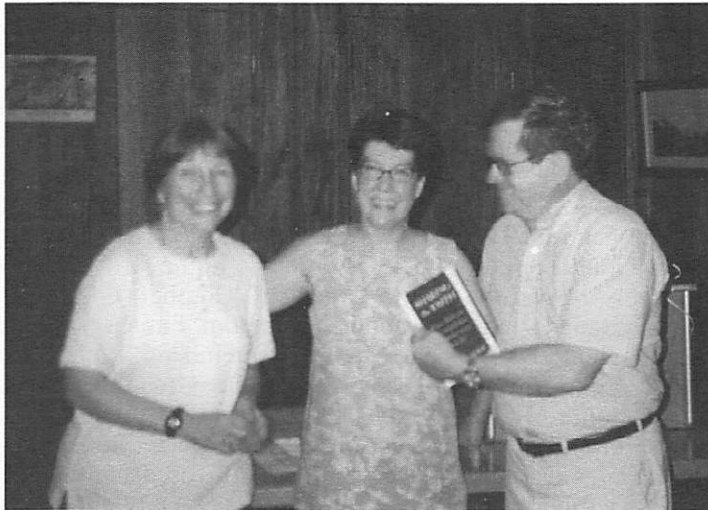


1941--August 18, Clear & cool. Picked beans & hayed. August 19, Clear & warm. Andover & Rumford for Widd, 3hrs. Rain. P.M. at home. August 20, Clear, cool. 8 hrs. in Hartford L4 & 5R8 & 9 for Alice Shepard Gilman, 70 mi. August 21, Clear, warm. 8 ½ hrs. in Hartford & finished. August 22, Clear. Picked last beans, 4004 lbs. from 1/4 A seed. P.M. research for Widd on Andover land (3hrs.) Combine is threshing our oats. August 23, Cloudy. Dug 26 bu. spuds. Tops are green & heavy. August 24, Clear & cool. Grover's family & our family picknicked at "Popple Dam" in Grafton, then went to Lakeside & Cambridge river at Grover's boat house. August 25, Built oat bin, etc. August 26, Clear & hot. Ran north line of Caldwell place for Widd, Andover L16R1 & L1R2, 7 hrs. August 27, Showers. Dumped oats, 490 bags in all, 8 or 9 hundred bu. Half sick with a cold. August 28, Clear & cold. Ran East and South lines of Caldwell place in Andover, 7 hrs. August 29, Clear & cool. Ground oats in a.m. Hauled straw in p.m. August 30, Showers. Wrote descriptions a.m. Ran camp lot for Harry Jordan in p.m., 3 hrs. August 31, Misty. Tinkered electric fence in garage. P.M. family went to Canton, Jay, Wilton, Weld, Byron, Andover, Bethel & home. From Wilton to Andover on the old Coos Road. September 1, Misty. Went to Old Orchard with Grover's (Brooks) family. September 2, Shingling the church. 14 men there. September 3, Clear & fine. Finished the church. Eastern Star Inspection. September 4, Clear & fine. Surveying for Phil Chadbourne in Rumford, L2 & 3, 1st Div., 4 hrs. Research, 3 hrs. September 5, Cloudy. Butchered veal. Came on sick with liver spell. Rain all night. September 6, Rain. I'm better. Worked all day on machinery and fences. Plowed a small piece in the "Calf Pasture." Housed 100 rock pullets in Coburn place. September 7, Cloudy, cool. Ruth was taken into the Congregational Church. In p.m. Brooks family and Hastings family went to Cambridge River [Upton]. September 8, Cold & windy. Cut ensilage corn down. Started cutting in. September 9, Cool. Filled the silo to the top. Dug 5 bu. spuds. Finished haying 2nd crop. September 10, Rain. So. Paris. Research 1 hr. on Hugh Thurston's job. Got meat scraps, etc. Brought dog to Greenleaf's from Gordon Grant's. September 11, Clear & cool. 8 hrs. for Leslie Davis in L26 & 27 R 2 and L 19 R6 Bethel. F.C. Degree on Gerard Williams. September 12, Clear & cool. Sawed wood for school. Norway in p.m. Back is very good. September 13, Clear & cool. 4 hr. for Fred Edwards in 20 R 8 & 17th Intervale Lot, 3 hrs. for Widd [Twaddle] in Lots 25, 26 & 27 R2 Bethel & L11, R11 Bethel (Christopher Bean place). September 14, Clear & warm. Fryeburg for cranberries. Got about ½ bu. September 15, Clear & warm. Coopered potato barrels in a.m. P.M. dug 30 bbls spuds. Cold shot, my last for 1 month. September 16, Clear & hot. Dug 95 bbl., about 1 Acre. September 17, Clear & hot! Cut Farwell's corn. September 18, Clear & cool. Filling Farwell's silo. Windy & dry. September 19, Clear & cool after a white frost. Worked on a potato conveyor. Crew dug 90 bbl. September 20, Clear & hot. Dug 111 bbl. spuds. September 21, Clear & warm. Hauled lumber to Grover's camp on Cambridge River. Turned camp 90 [degrees] & built porch floor. Home at 9 p.m. September 22, Clear & hot! Dug 123 bbl. spuds. 4 A. dug. New Allstate tire on car. September 24, Clear & hot. Dug 150 bbl. September 25, Clear & warm. Surveyed 3 ½ hr. for Willard Witham next [to] Norway

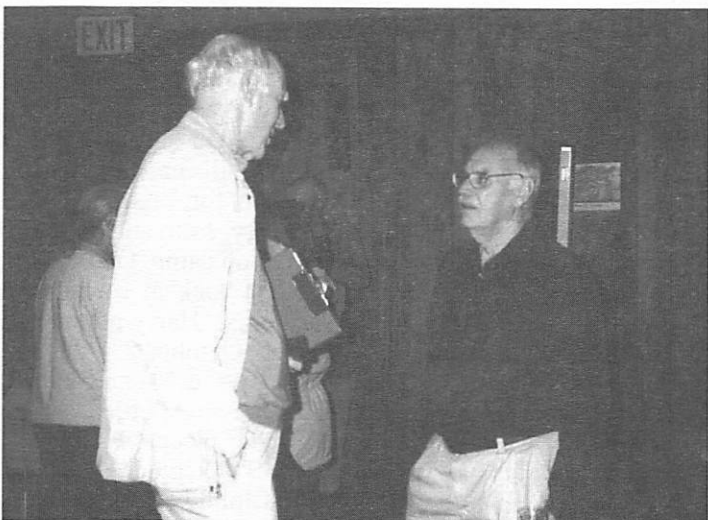
Airport. Crew dug 153 bbl. Finished Home piece. Moved to Horse Pasture. 9 A. + dug. September 26, Cool & windy. Started on our trip westerly. Went via U.S. Route 2 to Lancaster, St. Johnsbury, Montpelier, Burlington, Grand Isle, Rouse's Point, Plattsburg, Ausable Chasm to Ausable Forks, N.Y. Overnight camp. September 27, Cloudy, clearing. The Adirondacks via Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, Old Forge, etc. to Utica. Then south & east through the Catskills to Kingston, N.Y. and camp at Port Ewen. September 28, Clearing & hot. Crossed Hudson at Bear Mt. bridge after visiting West Point. Thence east across Connecticut & Rhode Island to Plymouth, Mass. September 29, Clear & cold. Saw Plymouth Rock. Then via 3A to Boston & Route 1 to Portland. Saw movies & then home at 9 p.m. Nice trip. 1125 miles +. September 30, Clear & cool. Digging Leslie Noyes spuds. October 1, Clear & cool. 6 hr. for Fred Edwards in L4R1, Mason. Guest Officer's night in Star. October 2, Clear & cool. Finished Noyes spuds., 900 bu. Started John's piece. October 3, Clouding & rain. Dug 26 rows on John's. Rain drove us off at noon. Graded spuds in p.m. Barb came home [from Gould Academy]. Gave the dog to Greenleaf. October 4, Clear & warm. Graded spuds & grounds oats in a.m. Finished John's piece in p.m. Rodney's party in eve. September 5, Rain. Dad, Grover, John & I went to camp & built the porch roof after 1 p.m. October 6, Clear & cool. Dug 98 bu. from seed piece. Then 97 ½ bbl. from 6 A piece on Mel Bean place. Good crop. October 7, Clear & cool. Dug spuds. October 8, Cloudy. Dug spuds. October 9, Clear & cold. Dug spuds. Only one day's digging left. M.M. degree for Gerard Williams. October 10, Rain. Put up spuds and housed machinery. P.M. Norway for treatment. Back is fine. October 11, Showers and colder. Made 3 window frames for the camp. Measured Mrs. Winslow's house lot to make a plan showing apple trees. October 12, Showers and cold. Trucked the "wangan" [supplies] to camp. Finished roof. Set up stove, cut in 2 windows & a door. October 13, Clear & cool. Finished digging spuds, 4730 bu. Laid steel on back side of Bean barn. October 14, Cloudy, rain. Put up a load spuds for Hannaford Bros. @ \$1.60 per cwt. Bob trucked 'em in p.m. October 15, Clear & warm. 8 hrs. for Hal Hastings in L27R 5 on Wiley Pasture. October 16, Cold & windy. Went to dedication of Farnsworth House at Gould Academy. P.M., 3 hr. for P. H. Chadbourne in L2 Rumford (S. side of Great River). October 17, Clear & warm. New water tub & new sills under water box [at the barn yard]. October 18, 3 hrs. for Fred Edwards. October 19, Clear & cool. Grover, Harry, John and I went to Upton to camp. Hung door & put paper on camp. October 20, Clear. Tried to drive a well. Struck a rock at seven feet. October 21, Cloudy. Hunted at the Forks. Harry got a deer. October 22, Clear & cool. I got a doe. October 23, Cloudy, rain. One half day on "B Brook" Point, no luck. Our families called on us in evening. October 24, Snowing a little. Back to the Forks. Grover got a deer near Tyler place. October 25, Snowing, squally. ½ day at Forks & Tyler place. No luck! Came home at night. October 26, Cloudy & cool. Took Barbara to Glen Ellis in p.m. October 27, Cloudy. Bethel to see [Ellery] Park about his line next to Wiley Pasture. P.M. at So. Paris, 2 hrs. for Edwards, 2 hrs. for Hal [Hastings], 2 hrs. for Bill Chapman. October 28, Clear & cold. 8 hrs. for Edwards in Mason Lot 4R1. October 29, Clear & cold. 6 hrs. for Bill Chapman & Alister Lowe in Lots 21 & 22R2 Bethel. 1 hour for Lowe extra.

(To be continued in the next issue)

Photo Gallery



Chairman of the Board of Trustees Al Cressy and his wife Jackie chat with Dr. Elizabeth De Wolfe of the University of New England (center) who delivered the annual Hall Memorial Lecture at Sudbury Canada Days in August on the topic, "Fighting Pious Frauds and Base Deceptions: Anti-Shakerism in New England." Dr. De Wolfe also autographed copies of her book *Shaking the Faith: Women, Family, and Mary Marshall Dyer's Anti-Shaker Campaign, 1815-1867*.



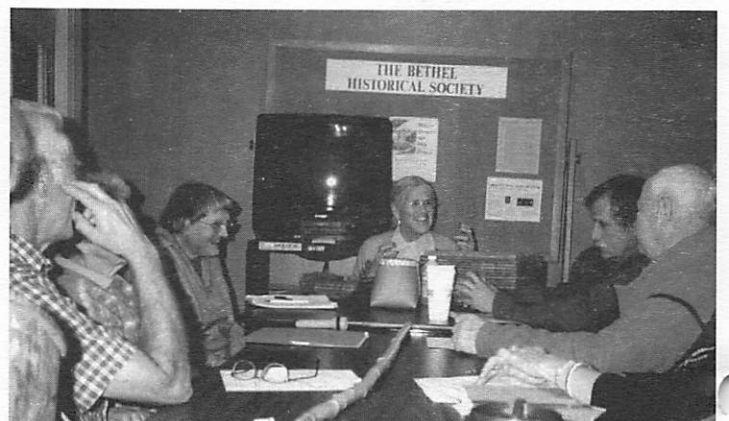
Life Member Dexter Stowell (left) speaks with Robert Spidell following Spidell's presentation on the history of his native town, Andover, Maine, at the October lecture in the Dr. Moses Mason House Meeting Room. Andover celebrated its bicentenary of incorporation in 2004.



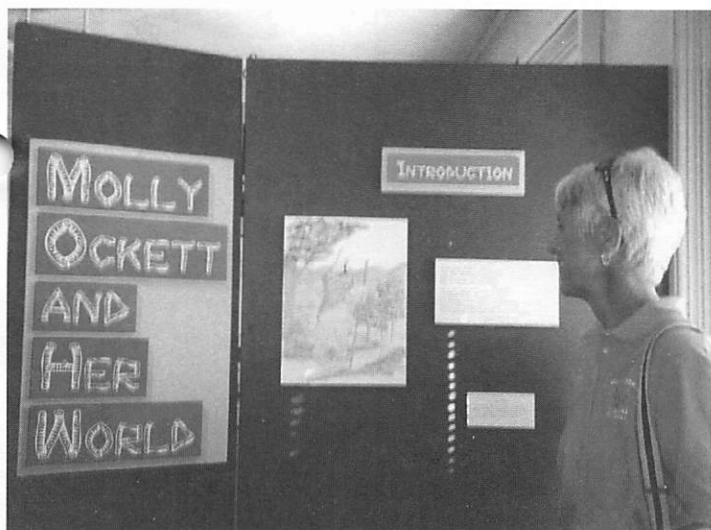
Veterans of the Vietnam War gathered with Gould Academy history teacher Brad Clarke, Ph.D. at the Vietnam War Oral History Night held on November 11 in the Meeting Room of the Dr. Moses Mason House. Front row (left to right): Allen Cressy, Richard Farren, Norm Clanton, Richard Grover; back row (left to right) Brad Clarke, Tim Sawyer, Don Feeney, Errol Briggs, John Davis.



Tiger Scouts and leaders visited the Society's exhibits at the O'Neil Robinson House in November. Front row (left to right): Brendon Stearns, Zack Kellner, Ryan Bennett Back: Kelly Crockett, Fabian Corriveau, Nancy Lee Stearns. Also present but not in photo was Keith Crockett.



Pat Stewart, author of a novel based on Molly Ockett's life, made a presentation on Molly Ockett at one session of the Society's fall course on Indian New England during October.



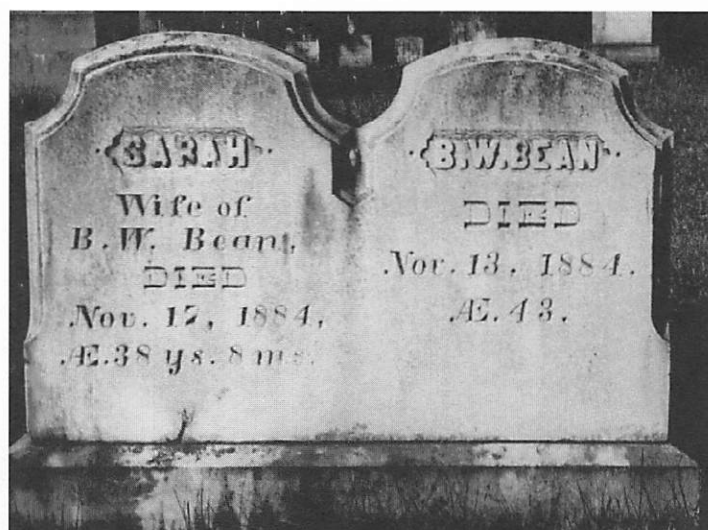
Jolan Ippolito of North Rumford was one of several members of the Molly Ockett Chorus, who visited the Molly Ockett exhibit following their concert on the Bethel Common in August. Photo courtesy of Suzanne S. Bartlett.



Five members of a Rotary Study Exchange from Turkey were photographed above in the formal dining room of the Dr. Moses Mason House during their visit to the Society's Regional History Center this autumn.



Alder River Grange #145 in East Bethel observed its centenary of incorporation in 2004. Society Director Stanley R. Howe made a slide presentation on the history of this Grange in November.



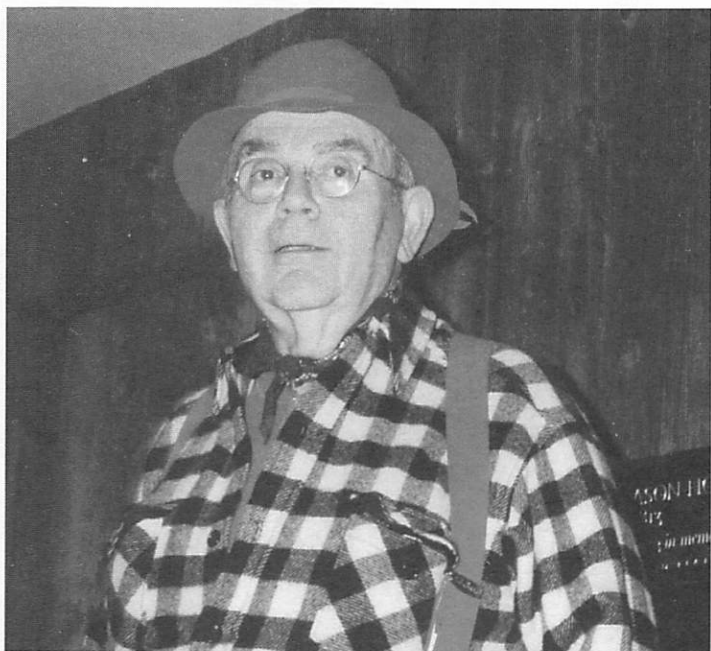
The graves of the parents of L.L. Bean are found in the Abbott's Mills Cemetery in Rumford. Benjamin W. Bean died on 13 November 1884; his wife Sarah died four days later, leaving their children as orphans.



Virginia Hastings Gamble, who served as one of the chairs of the Society's House and Garden Tour in June 2004, poses with Society Director Stan Howe in back of the Dr. Moses Mason House following a spring planning meeting.



Society Life Member and very active volunteer Dean Walker stands in front of a ca. 1900 thirty day clock that he recently restored and donated to the Society. It has been placed in the Museum Shop to keep time for customers and volunteers. Much appreciation is expressed to Dean for this fine addition to the O'Neil Robinson House.



Peter Gammons, also known as "Norbert Twichell," provided a good sampling of Maine humor at the 7th annual New Year's Bethel festivities on December 31. Four other venues, horse and wagon rides, marshmallow roast, fireworks, vesper service, children's crafts, and community bell ringing at midnight were also part of the offerings in the celebration leading to the arrival of 2005.



Member Profile

Rachel MacKay

Rachel MacKay, the daughter of Ernest Leroy and Abbie Richardson Brown, was born in Denmark, ME and moved to Bethel with her family in 1936. She attended Bethel school and graduated from Gould Academy in 1949. Prior to her marriage, she worked at the family business, Brown's Variety Store on Main Street. She married Blake MacKay in 1952; they are the parents of four children and have eight grandchildren. In the 1970s, she managed a fabric shop, Woof and Weft on Main Street and later worked at the Bethel Foodliner, retiring in 2002. She also taught Adult Education classes and was a 4-H and Brownie leader. A member of Eastern Star, she is a life member of the Bethel Historical Society and has volunteered regularly in the Museum Shop and assisted with the Special Projects Committee. She enjoys sewing and visiting with family and friends in her spare time.

In Memoriam

Died 26 November 2004, Thomas Wheeler, Bethel, Life Member

Died 8 December 2004, Jessie Fairbanks, Norway, Senior Member

New Life Members

Iris W. Baird, Lancaster, NH
 Norman K. and Barbara Ferguson, Hanover
 Orlando Fraser, Vidalia, GA
 Claire T. Loran, Medway, MA
 Thomas H. Mitchell, Culver City, CA
 Norman R. and Jean H. Ness, Auburn
 Robert C. and Katherine Schneider, Dedham, MA

Book Note

Maine Life at the Turn of the Century Through the Photographs of Nettie Cummings Maxim. By Diane and Jack Barnes. Charlestown, SC: Acadia, 1995. Pp. 128. Paper. \$19.95.

Originally published in 1995, this edition containing the photographs of western Maine photographer Nettie Cummings Maxim (1876-1910) was re-issued in 2003. N. C. Maxim captured much of her world on a hillside farm on Bird Hill in Bethel. Here we see buildings and people, particularly winsome images of her children, including her daughter Winnie, who was perhaps more cooperative with the camera than her two brothers. Mrs. Maxim also documents scenes beyond Bird Hill with engaging photos of Locke Mills, Bethel, South Paris and further afield. In addition, the book includes examples of her studies of barn cats and native flowers as well as scenes of winter and summer. What is particularly remarkable was the quality of these images, her skill as a photographer, and her gifts as an artist as well as being a busy farmer's wife and mother of three active children. Her untimely death at the age of thirty-four makes this book and its outstanding photographs all the more remarkable. The authors have provided very detailed captions based on the research of Blaine Mills, who has studied the Bird Hill neighborhood for many years. Those wishing to learn more about rural life around 1900 in the Western Maine mountains will find this book both rewarding and useful.

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For ordering information, please see page 12.

Editor's Corner

It is invariably a pleasure to hear from some of our readers, especially ones who have such positive comments on *The Courier* as Mimi Ashcraft of Westminster, MD. Recently, she wrote us saying that *The Courier* is "always well done and includes a nice range of topics, photos, etc." In addition, she wrote, "I was most pleased to see the very complete financial picture of the Bethel Historical Society included...."

I know that not everyone appreciates financial reports, member and donor lists, or even diary texts, but enough people find them of interest that it seems essential to keep them as part of the record as well as providing a "sampling" of items in the collection in addition to the inclusion of historical articles, book notes, Society news, etc. It also appears important to provide recognition to those who make contributions to the organization with their time and/or financial resources. In reaching a diverse membership and friend's list, we strive to include a wide variety of articles and photographs, at least some of which should appeal to nearly everyone. *The Courier* is an ongoing project: an issue is published; another is in the works at all times. Reader comments and suggestions are always welcome.

SRH

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- A 10% discount on purchases of \$10 or more from the Society's Museum Shop
- Special Research Library privileges, including reduced photocopying fees
- Subscription to the Society's quarterly, *The Courier*
- Preferred rate for exhibit hall/meeting room rental
- Voting rights in the Society
- Reduced course fees
- Special invitations to Society events

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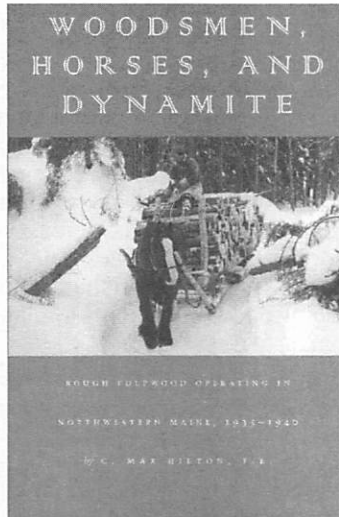
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Bethel, Maine



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